

Archives & Manuscript Collections
National Sporting Library
Middleburg, VA

**Joseph B. Thomas
Hunting Diaries
1913-1929**

Name: **Thomas, Joseph B.** **MC0008**

Materials: Hunting Diaries

Dates: 1913-1929 (bulk 1913-1922)

Volume: 1 cubic foot

Donation: Gift of Joseph B. Thomas IV, 1984 and 2001

Usage: Unless otherwise stated by NSL staff, these records are open for research without restrictions.

Biographical Note

Joseph Brown Thomas was a successful architect and financier from Boston, Massachusetts who settled in the Virginia Piedmont in 1910 to hunt and breed foxhounds. Having visited the area for the Great Foxhound Match of 1905 with Harry Worcester Smith, Thomas built Huntland, a large estate on lands adjoining what is now Foxcroft School. A year later he became the founder and president of the American Foxhound Club. Thomas donated his lands and hounds for use by the Piedmont Fox Hounds, and served as MFH from 1915 to 1919. He was also secretary of the Piedmont Beagles around the same time. A rivalry with Middleburg Hunt MFH Daniel Sands caused Thomas to lose his hunting country. Still, Thomas and his hounds (which became known as Mr. Thomas' Hounds) were invited to hunt throughout Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Georgia. Eventually in 1929 Thomas moved his pack to Grasslands just outside Nashville, Tennessee. However, the Great Depression and an ensuing decline in Thomas' health forced him to disband the pack in 1933.

Thomas is best known for two major contributions to the sport of foxhunting. His kennels have been credited with helping to strengthen the superiority of the American foxhound. He is said to have had as many as 1000 hounds at one time. Thomas bred his hounds extensively along the bloodlines of July, as well as Simple and Sinner, two hounds from Harry Worcester Smith's winning pack from the 1905 match. Thomas' other contribution to the sporting world was his 1928 book *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*, still considered to be a definitive work on American hunting.

Collection Description

The Joseph B. Thomas Hunting Diaries consist almost entirely of handwritten entries describing the hunting seasons of three separate hunts associated with Joseph B. Thomas. These diaries have been arranged into three series according to hunt: Piedmont Fox Hounds, Piedmont Beagles, and Overhills (North Carolina) Hunt. A fourth series consists of pedigree charts. The entries in each diary have been written on preprinted forms so that information such as the date, weather, number of couples, location, and any additional remarks can be recorded. The diaries are thought to have been created by Charlie Carver, who served as huntsman for Thomas for twenty-two seasons. The materials within each series are arranged chronologically.

Series and Subseries

- I. **Piedmont Fox Hounds, 1913-1917** **5 folders**
Handwritten accounts of outings during the hunt seasons of 1913 through 1917. Includes two diaries kept by Mrs. Charlie Carver. Arranged chronologically.
- II. **Piedmont Beagles, 1913-1917** **5 folders**
Handwritten accounts of outings during the hunt seasons of 1913 through 1917. Also includes one folder of miscellaneous materials such as schedules and clippings. Arranged chronologically.
- III. **Overhills (North Carolina) Hunt, 1920-1922, 1927-1929** **4 folders**
Handwritten accounts of outings during the hunt seasons of 1920 through 1922 and 1927 to 1929. Arranged chronologically.

Container List
MC0008

I. Piedmont Fox Hounds

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J19	01	Hunting diary	Nov. 1913-Feb. 1914
	02	Hunting diary	Sep. 1914-Mar. 1915
	03	Hunting diary	Sep. 1915-Jan. 1916
	04	Hunting diary	Sep. 1916-Feb. 1917
	05	Hunting diary	July 1917-Nov. 1917

II. Piedmont Beagles

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J19	06	Hunting diary	Nov.-Dec. 1913
	07	Hunting diary	Oct.-Dec. 1914
	08	Hunting diary	Oct. 1915-Jan. 1916
	09	Hunting diary	Oct.-Dec. 1916
	10	Miscellaneous	

III. Overhills (North Carolina) Hunt

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
J19	11	Hunting diary	Dec. 1920-Feb. 1921
	12	Hunting diary	Dec. 1921-Mar. 1922
	13	Hunting diary	Dec. 1927-Feb. 1928
	14	Hunting diary	Oct. 1928-Mar. 1929

This collection was processed by Robert Weber, May 2001.